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Amor Fati

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Graduate Program in Music

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Music

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AMOR FATI
(Thesis format: Score)

by

Aaron Lee

Graduate Program in Music

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music Composition

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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Abstract

Amor Fati, for wind ensemble, is built upon a formal design that divides the work into harmonic regions whose durations are based on approximations of the golden ratio. The harmonies in these regions are orchestrated using techniques inspired by Spectralism as well as the electro-acoustic technique of time-variant harmonic envelopes. Klangfarben technique is used to pass sustained harmonies around the ensemble, thereby stretching the duration of individual chords. These harmonies and their progressions are derived from several juxtaposed harmonic series and, at times, resemble the gradually changing triadic progressions characteristic of some examples of Minimalism. Layered with these elements are the conflicting ideas of concord and discord, and their respective beauties. This balance of beauty and ugliness is a central aspect of the meaning of the title, Amor Fati. All these elements are synthesized into an idiomatic composition for wind ensemble.

Keywords

Amor Fati, wind ensemble, composition, Canadian music, klangfarben, golden ratio
Acknowledgments

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Amor Fati
for wind ensemble

Aaron Lee
“Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: — so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön machen. Amor fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe! Ich will keinen Krieg gegen das Hässliche führen. Ich will nicht anklagen, ich will nicht einmal die Ankläger anklagen. Wegsehen sei meine einzige Verneinung! Und, Alles in Allem und Grossen: ich will irgends wann einmal nur noch ein Ja-sagender sein!”

-Nietzsche (from Die fröhliche Wissenschaft)

“I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.”

Translation by Walter Kaufmann, 1967, in Basic Writings of Nietzsche
Instrumentation

2 piccolos
4 flutes
2 bassoons
1 E-flat clarinet
3 B-flat clarinets
2 B-flat bass clarinets
2 E-flat alto saxophones
2 B-flat tenor saxophones
1 E-flat baritone saxophones
piano
4 horns in F
4 B-flat trumpets
3 trombones
1 bass trombone
2 euphoniums
2 tubas
double bass
timpani
percussion - 4 players (marimba, vibraphone, crotales, tubular bells,
tam-tam, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, bass
drum, snare drum)(bass bow needed for tam-tam and
crotales)

Performance Notes

This is a transposing score without key signatures. All accidentals within
are active for the entire duration of the measure.
Program Notes

Nietzsche’s concept of Amor Fati is to appreciate and love the beauty inherent in all things. Whether things are traditionally viewed as beautiful or ugly is irrelevant to this concept, as it is simply the perspective of the viewer that matters.

My composition, Amor Fati, uses constantly shifting timbres and textures to reinterpret various moments and provide multiple angles by which to appreciate their beauty. Harmonic moments are extended and spread temporally between the various instruments of the ensemble in a search for beauty. In accordance with the concept of Amor Fati, this search itself soon becomes an object of beauty.

In Nietzsche’s writings on the subject, he talks about his goal of achieving this ideal state of mind. Musically, Amor Fati seeks to follow a similar path. Starting off lethargic and sombre, the tone gradually lightens and livens until reaching an energetic, yet orderly, climax. The dénouement that follows is calmed, yet retains the lightness for which the music has been striving.

Amor Fati was completed in spring, 2015, in partial fulfillment of the MMus in Composition program at the University of Western Ontario.
Amor Fati
With great intensity (\( \text{\textbf{q}}=156 \))
Amor Fati
Amor Fati
# Curriculum Vitae

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